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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0347  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE 0071  
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RUEHBL/AMCONSUL BELFAST IMMEDIATE 1120  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DUBLIN 000521

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/03/2019  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [AF](#) [PK](#) [EI](#)  
SUBJECT: IRELAND: THE WAY FORWARD IN AFGHANISTAN AND  
PAKISTAN

REF: A. STATE 123222  
[1](#)B. STATE 122731  
[1](#)C. DUBLIN 510  
[1](#)D. DUBLIN 360

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Classified By: DCM Robert J. Faucher. Reasons 1.4(b/d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: On December 2-3, we met with Irish officials to gauge GOI reaction to the President's announcement of the way forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan (refs A and B), and to get an update on the possibility of additional Irish contributions to the effort. Our interlocutors expressed support for the President's approach and said deliberations continued on possible Irish contributions. They cautioned that the upcoming austerity budget (ref D) rendered additional contributions difficult. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) In separate meetings we talked with Isolde Moylan, Director of the Asia and Oceania Bureau in the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), and Peter McIvor, the Bureau's Deputy Director; John Biggar, DFA Director for International Security Policy; and Derek Mooney, Special Advisor to the Minister of Defense.

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IRISH SUPPORT STEADY, BUT NOT LOUD  
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[1](#)3. (C) All of our interlocutors expressed GOI support for the U.S. approach and stressed Ireland's commitment to stay involved in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Moylan and McIvor said Foreign Minister Micheal Martin would not be expressing his support directly by issuing a press release on Afghanistan, however, as he preferred not to communicate to the public that way and, in the case of Afghanistan, making a public statement might risk arousing public opposition to Ireland's involvement there.

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PERHAPS MORE POLICE TRAINERS  
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[1](#)4. (C) Biggar said Ireland was under pressure within the EU to increase the number of police trainers in Afghanistan under the EU's EUPOL police training mission. He said Ireland was looking for a way to provide the trainers, and would explore that possibility thoroughly. He hastened to add, though, that Ireland was constrained by a shortage of police available for domestic duty; a shortage of police willing to volunteer for Afghanistan; and expected significant cuts for policing in the budget. Biggar also outlined what he described as a further "two-fold" obstacle to increasing Ireland's EUPOL contribution. He said the

Irish Police Commissioner Fachtna Murphy, not the Minister of Justice, had the sole authority to approve deployment of police outside the country. Murphy, Biggar claimed, would make that decision solely on an operational basis (whether sending more police to Afghanistan would leave police too short-handed in Ireland); however, even if Murphy decided such a move was operationally feasible he would send police to Afghanistan only with the political cover of government support.

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MORE TROOPS? YES AND NO  
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15. (C) Biggar echoed Political Director Donoghue's message (ref C) that Ireland is unlikely to increase its troop contribution from its current seven non-combat troops at ISAF headquarters. Mooney, on the other hand, reported that, at Prime Minister Cowen's urging, Department of Defense deliberations were under way to explore sending more troops, possibly to help train the Afghan military. Again, Mooney added that upcoming budget cuts would make an increase in the troop contribution difficult. He said that he expected budget cuts to lead within a few years to a decrease in over all Irish troop contributions to UN-mandated missions overseas from about 700 troops now to around 400. In the majority of cases, Irish troops were not ordered to participate in such missions, but rather asked to volunteer. This, and the standard practice of serving only one six-month overseas rotation every three years, also limited the number of troops available.

16. (C) COMMENT: The Irish involvement in Afghanistan and Pakistan is three-fold: troops, trainers and development assistance. Ireland has sent a small number of troops and

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trainers, and has contributed a respectable amount of development assistance (ref A). Our Irish counterparts have reacted to our inquiries on increasing this involvement with assurances of political support heavily tempered by a healthy number of caveats, such as budget constraints, on the difficulty of contributing more. Despite these caveats, though, internal deliberations within the GOI continue, and we will continue to press our counterparts to consider increasing Ireland's involvement in all three areas. END COMMENT.  
ROONEY